

NEWS FROM TERENA (156)



TERENA creates new Middleware Task Force

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The TERENA Technical Committee has adopted the Terms of Reference of a new Task Force, to be known as TF-EMC2 (Task Force on European Middleware Co-ordination and Collaboration). The Task Force has been established for a period of two years from 1 September 2004; it will be chaired by Diego Lopez of RedIRIS (Spain). Its objective is to promote the development and deployment of open and interoperable middleware infrastructures among national research and education networks and academic and research institutions.

TF-EMC2 will concentrate its activities on six work items:

Firstly, the Task Force will develop the successful TACAR (TERENA Academic Certification Authority Repository) pilot further and turn it into a permanent service. The service will be promoted through the large-scale research projects that it can contribute to, as well as the international trust management initiatives that are currently under discussion.

The second work item is related to the Authentication and Authorisation Requester-Responder (AA-RR), the result closest to a reference implementation that TF-EMC2's predecessor TF-AACE was able to achieve, taking into account the different technologies and national initiatives in the Authentication and Authorisation arena. TF-AACE has produced a design of the system and a proof-of-concept implementation that will now be transformed into production-level software.

Campus middleware issues form the third field of interest. TF-EMC2 will produce a set of good-practice documents on establishing and maintaining directories, on Single Sign-On systems and their integration with Authentication and Authorisation Infrastructures, and on integrating available AuthN/AuthZ tools with existing services. The Task Force will also organise hands-on training events for information technology practitioners in academic institutions in Europe.

TF-EMC2 will also look into directory schema co-ordination and harmonisation. Co-ordination at a global level is currently still a step too far, as it is difficult to reach agreements at that level. The Task Force will therefore initially concentrate on defining and using a list of schemas that are relevant for information to be exchanged between collaborating universities.

TF-EMC2 will liaise with the Global Grid Forum and other virtual organisations. The Task Force aims to fill the gap between the Grid community and the research and education networking community by bringing these two worlds together.

Finally, the work of the Joint Research Activity on Ubiquity (Mobility) of the GN2 project will be discussed in the Task Force meetings. TF-EMC2 will provide to that Joint Research Activity new ideas and concepts and additional input to proposed solutions; conversely, the Joint Research Activity will use the dissemination channels of TF-EMC2.

More information on TF-EMC2 can be found at:
<http://www.terena.nl/tech/task-forces/tf-emc2/>

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